



MagiCurrents

Honest Sid Gerhart Ring 76
San

Diego Volume XV No. 9 September
2001

Ring 76 is on the Move

New Location to save money and end curfew

Effective September 10th Ring 76 meetings will be held at Jack's Magic Place at 4275 University Avenue in east San Diego. The reasons for leaving the American Legion Hall were the 9 p.m. curfew and the rent we must pay each month.

There has been some concern by some members about parking in the new area. There is a lot at the corner of University and 43rd street where you can park free of charge. There is also a great deal of street parking available in the area.

The September meeting theme is a "teach in" several of our advanced members will each conduct a brief seminar on several magic slights that are important in achieving good technique and presentation. The teach in session plus some surprises should make for an exciting evening.

Our next meeting will also be an opportunity to unveil the Ring 76 Library that has been in storage for many years. The library is being displayed and a complete inventory of the books, manuscripts and periodicals available will be given to each member. The books are available free of charge to every ring member and maybe checked out for as long as an individual has a need for them. We do remind members that others may wish to read the same book so don't be a book "hog" and keep it out of circulation forever.

Jack's Magic Place will be open on certain days of the week for anyone wanting to use the library or use the study materials. Those days are yet to be determined.

To get to Jack's Magic Palace, take I 15 to the University Avenue exit and head east. Look for the big white "Tortilla Tilly's" building on the right. Park in the fenced parking lot.

Jack's palace is right next door. Or follow the detailed map on the back of this issue of MagiCurrents.

Convention 2002 Progress Report

The IBM Headquarters in Saint Louis, Mo., says there is a new high energy push to make next summers International Convention in San Diego a highwater mark in magic gatherings.

Dale Salwak who books the talent for IBM Convention shows has now confirmed the following names, Chuck Jones & Company, Chuck is bringing his entire Lake Tahoe Review to the stage of Civic Theater. Joaquin Ayala who has been a bright star in Las Vegas and now at Harrah's in Laughlin, Nevada will bring his illusion show to the convention.

Others booked at this early date include Alan Shaxon, Steve Bargatze, James Dimmare and Aldo Colombini. This is only the beginning of a large group of magical talent now booked for next July's week of magic in San Diego.

Ring 76 members are being asked to volunteer as hospitality guide's during the convention July 3rd to the 6th. If you would like to be part of the excitement and help in answering questions from the many visitors to our city and the convention please let Don Soul know. We will begin circulating a sign up sheet very soon.

We are looking into getting bright colored vests with IBM Ring 76 on them for our member's to wear so that we stand out and people will know who to ask for information.

The Convention will be held at the Town & Country Convention Center in Mission Valley. Many of the delegates attending will be staying at the T&C Hotel as well. The big evening shows will be held at Civic Theater in downtown San Diego. Everyone

attending the convention will be given a four day pass on the San Diego Trolley that will provide transportation to and from Civic Theater.

August Meeting Includes Important Decisions and A Wide Array of Magic and Performers

The August meeting began at 7 PM at the American Legion Hall in LaMesa with 30 members and guests attending.

President Don Soul called the meeting to order and introduced our guests that included Jay Knapp who is a visiting member of the Tucson Arizona ring. Jimmy Lowe made his second visit to the ring; he is a clown and wants to know more about magic. Adam Bendas is 13 and is interested in magic. Todd Rehfuess visited for the first time, as did Al and Laura Rafferty who are interested in becoming new members of the ring. Al has been interested in magic for a number of years. Jeffery Francis was a guest of Alex Ustick.

Following the introduction of the many guests there was much discussion about moving the monthly meetings from the American Legion Hall to Jack's Magic Place on University Avenue in east San Diego (4275 University Ave.) The reasons for moving are rent on the current hall \$50-dollars per month and the 9 PM curfew. The members voted 18 to four to move to Jack's Magic Place beginning with the September meeting.

Gary Schwrtzwald announced that he would head up a Junior Magician's program for the ring. At the recent IBM Convention in Florida the IBM Board put new emphasis on the importance of bringing young people into the local rings and helping them get a solid start in performing magic. Gary will begin those efforts for Ring 76.

There were many announcement most of which are written about elsewhere in this newsletter. There was a brief raffle conducted by Diane Lane to generate funds for the treasury with three raffle items given out.

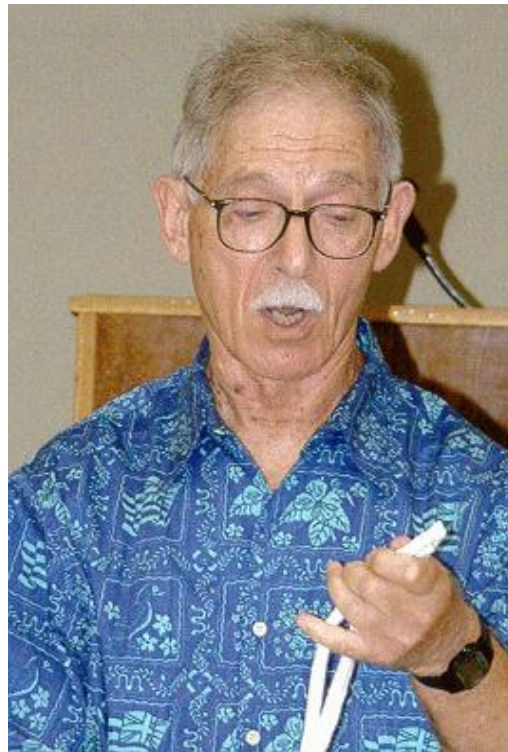
The theme of the August meeting was "My Favorite Trick" and members were asked to present their favorite trick.

The show kicked off with entertainment chairman Richard Ustick bringing out a large table of standard magic apparatus and then, to the tune of "My Favorite Things," did magic and sang. It was a clever, funny and exciting way to begin our program. To the amazement of everyone Richard Ustick has a very good singing voice. After his magical singing debut he became the master of ceremonies for the rest of the program.

Gary Dismukes was the next performer opening with a funny gag of flipping a knot into a piece of rope. After several tries there is the knot and then to our amazement Gary rubs his hand over the knot and it comes off the rope. Then he went into a very well executed rope routine with a jumping knot that changes colors. Very visual and well-presented magic.

Jack White was next he presented a mental routine that has been part of his regular stand up act for many years. The routine is from Larry Becker and given a few touches by Jack. The trick involves three members of the audience and a very fair selection of cards that are divined by the mentalist. The last card being a written prediction in a sealed envelope.

Robert Pozner a Ring 76 veteran took center stage and was seated at a small table. Bob presented some very clean slight of hand with three brass nuts, with two to the hand and one to the pocket and all three are back in the hand. After some play one of the nuts is replaced with a screw. Finally all three-nuts wind up on a bolt. It was clever, fast and very clean. Bob has put a lot of work in this routine and it shows because he is very smooth.



It Magic Joe giving us a very different "Professor's Nightmare"

Then came "Magic Joe" who's real name is Myron Joseph who presented a very different and unique version of "Professor's Nightmare". Just when you think you have seen every version of the trick possible Joe came up with a different twist on the effect. Joe cut three pieces of equal size from a large hank of rope and then went into the short and long rope routine. He closed with a nice simplex cut and restored rope. Nice clean magic.

James Thayer took the stage and told us rather than performing his favorite trick he would do the effect he has been doing longer than any other in his repertoire. A very clever "Do as I Do" card trick with a red and blue deck. It ended with both the magician and the young spectator who helped him having chosen the same card. James has a nice easygoing style that gave the effect a clever spin.

Bob Ingalls who is always ready to perform did some clever comedy with a big briefcase and a smaller one. The routine was original and funny. Then Bob moved into a very clever trick with a pocket watch, an old railroad timetable and matching the time on the watch with the time a train arrived in 1949. Bob has presented this effect many times in his regular magic act but this was a first for Ring 76 members and left them amazed. Ingalls has improved on a popular Ted Lesley routine and loves to brag the effect with props cost him less than 15-dollars.



Bryan McDaniels clever card routine, a Favorite Trick.

Another Ring 76 veteran Roy Armstrong stepped into the performing spotlight and did a very funny routine with a square knot but instead of a knot a square appeared in his rope. Then Roy presented one of the cleanest silk off rope I have ever seen. Roy has been doing this effect for many of his nearly 60-years of performing and in his hands it is a beautiful effect.

His wife Betty Armstrong followed Roy. Betty has been Roy's assistant in magic since the 1950's, I believe this maybe the first time we have actually watched Betty do a trick, she has been the spirit behind Roy in thousands of performances but here she is with a very clever giant card and frame. She removes the middle of the card and then restores it. Fast, clever and done with great personality. The membership believes Betty has a new career.

Smiling Bryan McDaniels stepped onto center stage to keep this evening of magic going. Brian is in the U.S. Marine Corps and has a great personality and a voice to go with it. He introduced his daughter who was in the audience and then he went into very clever card routine with the help of a young man. Then Brian had a card selected from the deck and turned the deck into a gun and shot the selected card out of the barrel. It was more impressive magic from our ring members. We could all see why that was Brian's favorite trick, because he does it very well.

Closing the program was Diane Lane who was assisted by Cassi and Umbrella Cockatoo. A card was selected put back in the deck and dropped into a bag. Cassi was then put in the bag with a piece of rope and the bird was to lasso the selected card. The only problem was Cassi did not like being in the bag and made several attempts to escape before finally emerging with the rope in her beak and the selected card tied to the other end of the rope. Diane said it all went perfect in rehearsal. Isn't that always the way?

All of the people presenting their Favorite Trick. L to R . . . Bryan McDaniels, Bob Pozner, Jack White, Jim Thayer, Gary Dismukes, 2nd row Bob Ingalls, Jeff Francis, Betty Armstrong, Diane Lane & Cassi, Christna Ustick, Dick Ustick, Alex Ustick, Roy Armstrong and Myron Joseph (Magic Joe)

It was a full evening of magic and we still got out of the hall ontime. The September meeting will include a trick "Teach In" at our new meeting location, Jack Magic Place, 4275 University Ave.





d Report

This month the Board meeting was held at Jack White's Magic Palace. This will be the new site of Ring meetings

starting in September. Don Soul, President of Ring 76, called the board meeting to order at 7 PM sharp:

President Don Soul started with the "pending business" of a schedule of events for the coming year's meeting together, and discuss lectures for the future.

a) September's meeting will feature a Teach-in. Teachers will include Dick Dale (if available), Jeff Marcus, Syd Segal, Bob Pozner and Diane Lane. Syd Segal asked that members bring a deck of cards for his portion of the workshop teach in. Because he will be teaching his own original tricks he is also being allowed to sell a set of lecture or teach-in notes for \$5.00 to cover the cost of printing. Bob Pozner asks that members bring four half dollars for his part of the teach-in. Dick Dale says he will provide what ever is necessary for his teach in material, Jeff Marcus will provide rubber bands, and Diane Lane asks that members bring rope.

b) The October meeting will have a Halloween theme, with members showing off their "bazaar" or spooky magic. November meeting will be a dealer's night. We also have a reel of 16mm movies of famous magicians we may run in addition at this meeting. The December holiday potluck dinner will be slightly different this year. The entertainment will feature Ring members whose stand up acts may take part in our January special meeting for the Convention Committee meeting. See the Convention Committee Report for more on this event.

It was decided by the board that lecturers, including those sanctioned and paid for by the ring, will be held on a night other than the regular meeting night. This would free up more meetings for members to perform, and take part in learning; practicing and applying magic techniques.

Rick Marotta will be lecturing the month of February. Don Soul and Richard Ustick are setting that event up and hope to make this a free lecture fo all Ring members. Other lectures discussed for the year 2001 include Lee Asher and Tom Allen. The Lee Asher lecture is being handled by Dick Dale and the Tom Allen lecture by Jack White. Dates for these lectures will be listed in MagiCurrents.

Dick Ustick announced that he still has a need for more members to join the constitution committee. Now is your time to make Ring history. Jack White has met with the Marketing Director of the IBM Chuck Miracle and was told that the IBM will share in the profits of the public shows during the convention if our ring sells tickets. We may produce a tee shirt and sell it before and during the convention with our ring logo on it. We may also sell pins with the ring name on them. Jack also outlined a plan for raffle items to sell at the convention. Two sheets of uncut playing cards would be purchased and we will make an effort to have as many prominent professional magicians sign the cards as possible. These cards will be framed with a legend outline the names of the people who signed. They; will be raffled off on the last day of the convention.

Message from the President

Thanks to everyone that attended the August evening meeting...the last Ring 76 meeting to be held at the American Legion hall, at least for awhile. The performance response to My Favorite Trick night was tremendous. In the past, members had noted that not enough performing goes on anymore. Well, the board fixed that with at least six more meetings this year

The Night's talented performers and assistants take a final bow

Chuck Miracle will be in San Diego in October for a meeting with the board. As this involves the National convention, both the North County and Orange County Rings will be invited to this meeting.

Jack White reported that the Ring 76 Library is now set up and ready to loan books to Ring members.

Sumit Dua Ring 76 Treasurer was given two checks for \$50 each by Jack White. That money is for payment of advertising in MagiCurrents by The Gathering and Seaport Village Magic Shop. Sumit reported that the ring has a current balance of \$1,572.19 in our checking account. Tom McCarthy is going to make one more appeal for a logo at the next Ring meeting. He is awaiting material from Jack White to move forward with an official ring banner.

Don Soul discussed the progress on the membership directory, and hopes to have it distributed in September or October. Anyone who does not want his or her name published should ask to be removed from the list soon. If you have a new address, phone number or e-mail address and you are not sure it is on the current list check with Don Soul or Richard Ustick as soon as possible.

With no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 8:47 PM. The next Board meeting will be September 24th and as usual, all members are encouraged to attend.



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devoted to entertainment by the members. I hope you all rise to the occasions, dust off your old props and go for it.

I have to make an appeal to you all by requesting your help in participating on the various committees we have going. Without

your help, things like a constitutional revamp, a Quality Ring Recognition award or a superb 2002 I.B.M. convention simply won't happen. That's right, our committees need assistance, both now and in the future, so please pitch in, like several members have done already, and offer whatever time you can. There will be more mention of our committees at this month's meeting.

The treasury is in good shape (thanks to the previous board), a Ring 76 web site has been established (thanks to Sumit Dua) and the Ring library has proudly taken its place (thanks to Jack White) at our new meeting venue - Jack's Magic Museum, 4275 University Avenue, just east of I-15. With an informal "pre-meeting" atmosphere in effect, feel free to mingle before the meeting starts by exploring the place, exchanging magic sleights with each other and also be sure to check out our new feature: a monthly barside performance, this month starring Tom McCarthy. And if it's lectures you want, keep checking MagiCurrents; there promises to be many.

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New Magic Class to run three weeks in San Diego.

Magician Rodney Reyes will conduct a special seminar on card magic the last two weeks of September and the first week of October.

It will be called "Kardtrix" and will cover the fundamentals of handling cards, sleights and new effects. Reyes says much of what will be taught will be so called "New Wave" magic. Included in the seminar will be basics of theater as well as magical skills.

The classes will be limited to 30-students and at least four different guest lecturers will be presented. David Eldridge and Brian Tutor are two of the guest lecturers the other two are being kept secret for now.

The classes will be held Monday through Thursday evenings from 7:30 to 9 P.M., and will include 16 sessions of instruction. Reyes says everyone taking part will come away from the experience with a fresh look at card magic and the knowledge of being able to be a better performer.

The cost of the 16 sessions is \$135.00 unless you get a friend to sign up then it is \$100.00. Rodney is holding a special open house and sign up session for the "Kardtrix" lectures and lab on September 5th at the Epicenter clubhouse across the street from Mira Mesa High School in the Mira Mesa area.

You can also get more information directly from Rodney Reyes by calling 858-484-5431 or you can go to a web site set up for the seminar kardtrix101@aol.com



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P.C.A.M. – HOT HOCUS-POCUS

By Don Soul

In the midst of 110 degrees-in-the-shade Palm Springs sunshine, the Pacific Coast Association of Magicians, under the watchful eye of conference co-coordinator Mike Bailardo, got under way at 3pm sign-in Thursday, August 2nd. The person in front of me, first in line, turned to me, shook my hand and introduced himself as Peter Raveen! I walked away and didn't return until Friday morning, my hand preserved in a plastic bag as I drove all the way back to our rented cabin in Idyllwild.

Friday began the lectures and the first magi to speak to the 195 attendees was one of my all-time favorites, Luciano Scala. If you've never heard of this genius with the pasteboards, you will. Scala's wizardry was enough to satisfy me for the remainder of the meeting but no sooner had he left the room than David Ginn took the floor and gave us a presentation of his effects (with homage to Skipper Frank's Blow Loop pipe, to which the Skipper blessed Ginn the rights). After lunch, Canadian Shawn lifted our spirits with some useful and workable "improv" magic, which is simple to fabricate and effective to present. After that, the close-up contest performers Jeff McLeod, Kosmyk, John George, Mike Frieman, Jeremy Freneau and Ryan Jade all vied for the award with some excellent performances. Unfortunately, I was burned out and return to Idyllwild to rest as the Pro Magic Challenge show took place in the Springs Theater at the convention center that evening.



Between sessions at the PCAM Convention in Palm Springs, Doug Brewer who lectures in San Diego Sept 11th shows Ring 76 member Syd Segal a coin move.

Saturday, and a ragged Ring 76 president hustles in for yet another day of neat stuff, along with other San Diegans like Doug Brewer, Len Cardoza, Diane Lane, Fred Kaplan, Syd Segal, Fred Bull, Stew McKinley, Dick Barry and Eddie Lake. There was a kid's show

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Subscriptions to MagiCurrents are \$40 per year for out of area magicians. Membership Questions should be sent to the club treasurer, Sumit Dua. All Ring 76 members must be members in good standing with the International Brotherhood of Magicians.

Articles, contributions, and letters should be sent to: MagiCurrents
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workshop by Ginn and a dealer's show (16 in all) leading up to Terry Seabrooke's hilarious lecture after which the President's luncheon followed. Danny Archer's lecture to start the afternoon was a delight. Immediately following that, the stage competition got underway leading off with 90 year old (!) Oikawa Riechi followed by 14 year old Kate Arnold, Serena Lumiere, Rod Chow, Jeff McLeod and Jeff Evans. Kevin Cardona emceed and coordinated both contests and his efforts were outstanding. That evening the

Springs theater opened its doors to the Stars Of PCAM 2001 show with emcee Terry Seabrooke introducing Mercer Helms, former Grand Prix winner Michi Hasegawa and "Zaney" Blaney then, after the intermission, the Pro Magic Challenge winner, Dave Womack, performed a reprise of his act the night before and, to close, a spectacular full-length illusion show by Chuck Jones & Company...part of "the company" being his wife who helped performed the Jones' astounding metamorphosis routine.

With Sunday's brunch and awards ceremony, the activities were over. HAH! Not so. Everyone was split up into groups and herded into hotel conference rooms at the Palm Springs

Hilton where four close-up artists – David Malek, Danny Archer, Shawn Farquhar and Daryl (Martinez) – proceeded to dazzle us in rapid succession with 10 minute routines that had us begging for more as they rotated between the rooms. That was the fastest 40 minutes on earth. After Daryl's afternoon lecture, an evening bull session took place in the bar as magis Raveen, Blaney, Bailardo, Seabrooke and the Wilds (dealers from Britain) did sleights and chewed the fat about characters like Socar, Blackstone and others. Next year the PCAM meeting moves to Lake Powell, Arizona; yeah, like Palm Springs wasn't hot enough!

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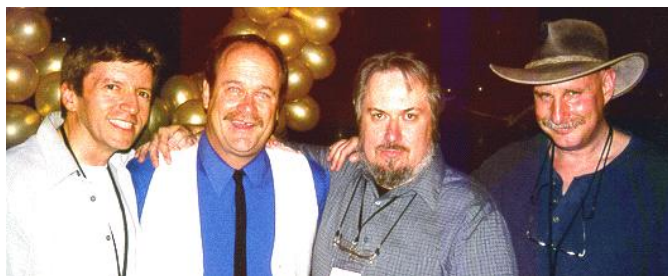


Magic Magazine Turns 10 With Magic Event!

Magic Magazine celebrated their 10th Anniversary with a magic happening in Las Vegas at the Orleans Casino and Hotel from August 19th to the 22nd. It was not a convention, it was not a conclave, it was not a gathering it was an "Event".

Stan Allen the Editor and Publisher of Magic Magazine put the event together with the help of his staff and a lot of friends. It was designed for people who love magic, work in the art or have it as a hobby.

About 850 of these people each paid \$235-dollars to attend this one time only magic happening. It will not be repeated again.



Former Ring 76 members Chuck Martinez, Bob Sheets, Tom Allen (Al Stanko) and Paul Harris.

There were three days of lectures and three evenings of shows. Two stage shows in the Orleans show room and one evening of close-up featuring some of the best close-up performers, including Guy Hollingsworth, Bill Malone and Paul Gurtner to name only three.

There was a schedule of events for each day but there were no names and everyone was afraid to miss a session because they might miss something they wanted to see. Everyone that lectured gave out lecture notes that were printed on a real press and had good pictures and artwork. They were free and we were given a 3-ring binder to store them.

Each program was featured on two large screens and the television camera's were professionally operated and were real studio cameras. The sound was excellent. Throughout the three day

event Bill McIlhenny presented some of the rarest films and tapes in magic history. A four minute clip of Channing Pollock doing his dove act on the Ed Sullivan show in 1962, brought the house down when at the end Channing Pollock walked out on stage with Lance Burton and talked about creating the dove act.

The dealers room was called the "Advertisers Fair" and was filled with exciting magic that ranged from close-up to stage illusions. There you mingled with people like Michael Ammar, Mike Caveney, Jon Racherbaumer, Jim Steinmeyer and Michael Finney.

One of the many surprises of this event was an appearance by magic superstar David Blaine. We were told that David for some reason had not had any sleep for 3-days. He was truly "spaced out" as he set down on stage to be interviewed by Max Maven who asked direct questions of the TV-Star.

Maven asked if Blaine had not become more of a "stuntman than a magician?" David sidestepped the question. Blaine told his audience he admired Evil Kenevil, Marlon Brando and Fidel Castro. He said his next stunt of sitting on top of a flagpole in November for three days and then falling into a pile of cardboard boxes could seriously injure him.

The very articulate Max Maven tried to keep the very inarticulate David Blaine on track for the 50-minute session, but Blaine mumbled and bumbled in all directions. In spite of Blains nonsense this was a magic event that other convention planners can take a real lesson from.

HOCUS POCUS


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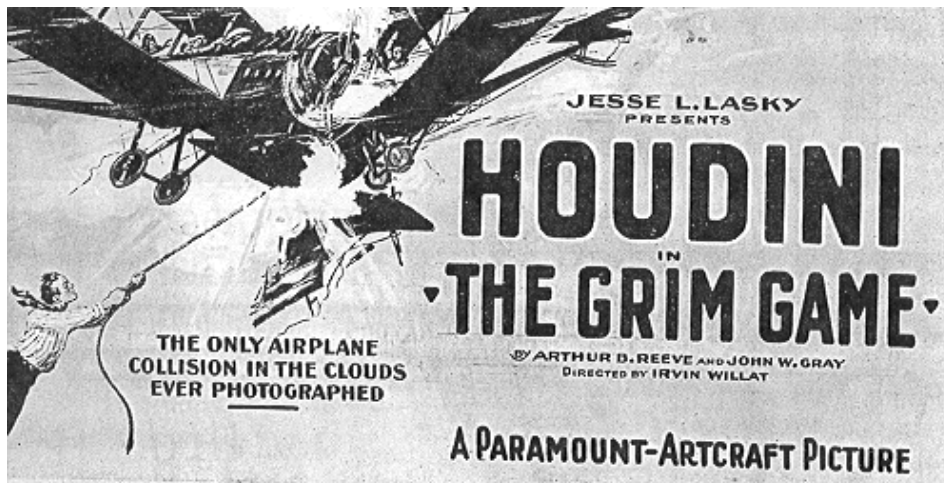
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Magic Notes from Jack White:

Eighty-two years ago, on September 7, 1919 the movie "The Grim Game" starring Harry Houdini the magician and escape artist was released to the movie going public. The film was filled with the kind of hokum and thrills that would continue to keep the name of Houdini in the public eye for years to come.

The above advertisement and the rest of the illustrations used in this article are all taken from the only known press book for this film to survive all these years later. Some of these graphic's have not been published in 60-years.

It is not clear today if a negative or print of this film exists in the Paramount Pictures vaults. Some magic historians claim to have screened the film in recent years. But a check of the Paramount film archives shows no print or negatives are currently available. During this period of movie making films were released to theaters on a highly flammable film stock made of nitrate. Safety film would not be developed until the mid-1940's. If not taken care of in the film vaults nitrate film dissolves and turns to a powder form in the film storage cans.

The "Grim Game" was not Houdini's first experience in the movies. A year earlier in 1918 he appeared in a 15-Chapter Serial titled "The Master Mystery" an independent production that was quickly made in four weeks. Houdini's fee was 1500-dollars a week. The serial was produced at a studio in Yonkers, New York, during the daytime while Houdini appeared in vaudeville during the night time hours.

With the release of the serial Houdini realized that movies could take his name to more audiences than he could ever play in the variety theater. Making movies reenergized him as an entertainer.

When Jesse L. Lasky, offered him a contract at Paramount Pictures in California to make two movies Houdini jumped at the opportunity and he and Bess his wife quickly moved to the mystical, celluloid world known as Hollywood.

Unlike Octagon Studio's where he had previously made his movie debut, Paramount Pictures was a major movie studio with stars like Mary Pickford, John Berrymore, Rudolph Valentino and Gloria Swanson. In 1919 it was estimated that 40-million Americans went to the movies each week. The "flickers" as they were called were quickly becoming the main entertainment forum of the day.



The "Grim Game" was a murder mystery and allowed Houdini to defy death at least twice in each of the films six reels. He escaped from a jail, he made a dive between the wheels of a speeding truck, he made a climb down the side of a prison, he fought on the brink of a gorge, he made a desperate leap from the roof of a skyscraper and released himself from chains and later from a straight jacket. But the real heart stopper of the film was when Houdini transfers himself in midair from one airplane to another and then we see the planes collide in midair and crash to the ground below.

The airplane crash was an accident that turned into a publicity bonanza for the movie. The two airplanes used in the movie were Curtiss Canuks and were rented from movie director C.B. DeMille who loved flying and owned two of the three airports in Los Angeles at the time.

Continued, next page



The scene called for Houdini to jump from one airplane to another in an effort to rescue his kidnapped girlfriend. The scene was filmed at 2200 feet above the beach at Santa Monica.

In the film we see Houdini swing from a rope tied to one plane and land on the wing of the second plane.

According to author Kenneth Silverman in his book "Houdini, the career of Ehrich Weiss" Houdini wanted to do the stunt himself, but his director Irvin Willat felt it was too dangerous and used a former Air Service pilot and stuntman named Robert E. Kennedy. Houdini had broken his wrist during an earlier scene where he escaped from a prison and it had not healed by the time the company was ready to shoot the airplane scenes so the director brought in the stunt double. As the planes rendezvoused over the Santa Monica beach an updraft threw the top wing of the lower biplane into the landing gear of the other, from which it hung like a pendulum, the planes' propellers slicing each other's wings and fuselage as they plunged from the sky to the ground below. All the while director Willat and his cameraman in a third plane continued to film the collision and crash.

The collision and crash of the two planes was not in the original script but with this spectacular footage it was quickly written into the film. Then later another plane was taken to the top of Lookout Mountain that over looked Hollywood and there perched on the side of a cliff to make the plane look as though it was in the air the scenes with Houdini making the mid air leap were shot in

close up and cut into the crash footage. Below is a scene and if you look closely you can see the cast on Houdini's broken left wrist.



The scene then cuts to the twisted wreckage on the beach and Houdini, bleeding and his shirt ripped to shreds, emerges from the wreckage with his girlfriend in tow.

The stuntman was injured but not seriously, but that didn't matter because Houdini took credit for the stunt himself, and after the picture was released the name of Robert E. Kennedy was never again mentioned. Houdini loved to tell reporters and audiences that the crash occurred at 4000 feet in the air and he thought he was a "goner".

He offered a thousand dollars reward to anyone proving the crash was not genuine. It was a real crash, but all of the shots of Houdini dangling from the rope and on the wing of the plane were shot on the ground. But it made a wonderful movie and was just the kind of hokey and hype that audiences expected from Houdini and pushed the grosses on the film at the box office even higher.

Most reviewers found the "Grim Game" jammed full of thrills and Magician Howard Thurston asked the Society of American Magicians to officially endorse the film as one of the most sensational boosts for magic that America had ever had, and they did.

Two veteran screenwriters Arthur B. Reeve and John W. Gray wrote the "Grim Game". Reeve is best remembered for his wonderful "Craig Kennedy the Scientific Detective" stories that appeared regularly in Cosmopolitan Magazine. But after the release of the film and its immediate success Houdini told friends he had written most of the scenario himself, but allowed Reeve and Gray to take credit because he did not have temerity to put his name on the film as author as well as star. When that word got back to Arthur Reeve and John Gray, they vowed they would never work with Houdini again. It is believed what Houdini may have actually written were the scenes involving the crash of the planes that were not in the original story.

Houdini was paid 2500-dollars a week by Paramount for fifteen weeks work on the "Grim Game" and a second feature "Terror Island".

Terror Island was filmed for the most part on Catalina Island but did not have the action or storyline that "Grim Game" had given audiences. Both movies made a great deal of money and were in release or re-release by Paramount Pictures until the late 1920's when talking pictures replaced the silent films. They were popular for one reason, the star. Houdini.

Continued, next page

AN OPPORTUNITY FOR EXHIBITORS

This is a proof of a story-mat which we believe your town newspapers that use mat material will gladly print.
THE MAT WILL COST YOU NOTHING

Houdini Prepares for a Clean-Up

The above picture and copy are from the only surviving press book from "Grim Game". It is telling theater owners and managers that newspapers were eager to print the stories they had manufactured about America's favorite wonderworker Houdini.

The stories were of Houdini's many exploits on the stage. His escapes and close calls with death. Ever the self-promoter Houdini took every opportunity to plug his latest book in news stories promoting his movie. His book "The Right Way to do Wrong" had just been published and it is mentioned in several stories in the press book.

Houdini's work in the movies would insure that his theaters would be full when he presented his "in person" magic act and his "Magician Among the Spirits" program that replaced the more strenuous escape act during the final years of his life.

During the millennium Magic Magazine spent an entire year talking about the top 100-magicians of the century just past. The number one most important name in magic was Harry Houdini. His accomplishments have been set down in books and at least two of his films have survived and are readily available today, "The Man From Beyond" and "Haldane of the Secret Service". Neither film is as good as the Grim Game but they offer us a look at the legend that seems to grow larger with each passing year.

(Editor's Note: A reproduction of the "Grim Game" Press Book is now part of the Ring 76 Library and is available to any ring member for study.)

Top Magic Performers Bring Shows to San Diego this Fall.

Master Magician and Illusionist Bradley Fields brings his full evening show to the East County Performing Arts Center in El Cajon for one evening and one performance only, October 4th with a 7:30 PM program. This is a wonderful theater for a magic show. Seats range in price from \$22 to \$12 per-person.



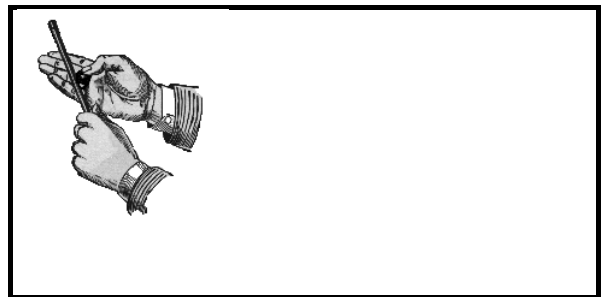
Bradley Fields and company from Washington D.C. bring their illusion show to the East County.

On Sunday October 14th at the Poway Performing Arts Center on the Poway High School Campus, Milt Larsen brings his "Its Magic" show to San Diego County. This is their first time in this theater, in years past they have played Escondido. One performance at 4 PM. Tickets are \$20 for adults and \$10 for children all seats.

The only act that is being advertised for the Poway engagement of "Its Magic" are the Hamners and their magic with exotic birds. There will be four other acts on the show, however at this writing their names are not available.

At the California Center for the Performing Arts in Escondido, the so called "bad boys of magic" Penn and Teller take over the stage with their evening of comedy and magic. Penn and Teller have cut their touring down considerably over the years and are spending more and more time in the showrooms of Las Vegas and Atlantic City. San Diego continues to embrace their kind of show and they continue to make almost annual appearances here. This is their first time in Escondido however.

Penn & Teller appear Saturday, November 17th in one show only at 8 PM. Tickets range in price between \$19 and \$49-dollars. Tickets are now on sale for all of the shows coming to San Diego County.



Terry Lunceford

Magician

Supports Ring 76 and
the IBM

Three Door Panel Production -- The Magical Appearance

Jon Hand's View from the Cheap Seats

Effect:

A closed three-fold screen stands center stage, away from all drapes and stage furniture. Two assistants flank the screen, which is an open wooden framework covered with newspaper or decorative paper on the outside two panels. The center panel is left uncovered.

The first assistant swings open the front panel, showing both of its sides. The second assistant swings open the back panel, also showing both sides. With both panels open, the center panel framework is fully exposed.

The assistants close the back and front panels. Instantly the paper panels burst forward, and the magician or a special guest makes his appearance!

Requisites:

A three-fold screen made of 2 x 4 lumber, each panel being 6' high x 3' wide (unless you are quite tall). Hinge together all three panels to form the screen, *Figure 1*. The center panel remains stationary, and may even have small feet to help stabilize it. The front panel should be hinged on the audience's right, opening outward toward the audience; the back panel should be hinged on the audience's left, opening away from the audience toward upstage. The front and back panels should be covered with newspaper, colored paper, or decorated paper. To start the illusion, the panels should be hinged closed, leaving the appearance of one panel, *Figure 2*.

Working: The magician (or guest to be produced) stands behind the closed three-fold screen, *Figure 3*. The first assistant hinges open the front panel 180° toward downstage, which shows both sides of it and one side of the back panel. The magician, still hidden by the back panel, steps quickly and quietly behind the opened front panel, *Figure 4*. The second assistant opens the back panel 180°, by stepping through the opening and swinging the panel open towards upstage, which shows both sides of it and leaves the center panel framework exposed, *Figure 5*. The assistants flank the opened screen for a second or two, before closing the panels in the reverse order in which they were opened. To the audience, both sides of the screen have been inspected and demonstrated ordinary, yet the illusion has not yet begun. The second assistant closes the back panel, stepping through the center panel and taking up his original position alongside the center framework, *Figure 6*. The magician steps from the open front panel to the back closed panel, *Figure 7*. The first assistant then closes the front panel, and takes up his original position alongside the center framework, also *Figure 7*. To the audience, the screen has been opened, shown to be empty, and closed. Suddenly the magician (or guest) is announced and bursts through the paper panels to appear magically in the framework, *Figure 8*.

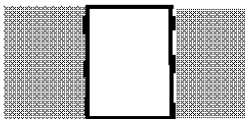


Figure 1 - Opened Panel Arrangement

Figure 2 - Closed Panel Arrangement
Overhead View



Figure 3 - Illusion Set-up Position

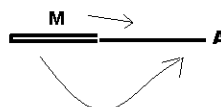


Figure 4 - Front Screen Opened

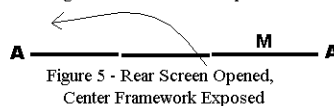


Figure 5 - Rear Screen Opened,
Center Framework Exposed

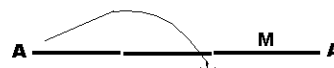


Figure 6 - Reversing Procedure

Commentary: This old standby simple illusion makes a great opener to produce the magician, or a great way to introduce a featured guest with little rehearsal. My version is revised in its working from the George B. Anderson version in *Magic Digest*. This illusion is a good choice for the maximum effect for the least amount of hassle. I have produced myself this way to start a "Night Club Evening" for a college jazz band theme concert. I stayed in character all night, serving as the host, club manager, band leader, and magician in between music sets.

I have experimented with this quite a bit, and I have many suggestions to give you on this one. Each of these comments is an improvement based upon actual experience on stage.

1. Brace all of the corners of the panels with small diagonal blocks of wood. Use screws to hold the frames together, not nails, and predrill the holes with a smaller bit than the screw.

Countersink the screws. For maximum rigidity, put a vertical and horizontal screw through the frame into the corner braces, too. To make the panel stand by itself, make four "feet" for the center panel, attaching them flush to front and rear of the bottom of the center panel. Painting the frameworks is not necessary, but flat black or a bold color makes the illusion look more impressive.

2. Use a chisel and "mortise in" the 4 to 6 heavy hinges that you use to hinge the panel frames together. This will keep cracks from appearing between the panels when they are open, a necessity. The actual moving joints of the hinges should be beyond the edges of the framework.

3. Cover the two outside panels with a colorful paper that schools have on big rolls, such as red, orange, or yellow. OR, find white newsprint paper on remnant rolls, and decorate or letter the paper to match the theme of the evening. OR, find wide, attractive gift wrap. The most important thing is that the paper cover each opening without having to have a seam.

4. Place tiny crosshair slits at shoulder level in each paper panel; this facilitates a fast and easy tearaway for the production by putting the appearee's fingers into the slits and tearing out and down as he steps forward.

See **View**, page 12

View

Continued from page 11

5. Light the illusion from the FRONT only! Any other light source will give it away. Work carefully with your light man to be sure he does not botch this. The closed panel should be center stage, a good distance from all curtains and stage furniture, but not

up front near the front curtain. Although the stage curtains can be opened fully, you can opt to open your stage curtains only partway, about 6 feet beyond the positions where the panels will be when OPENED. This will help screen the appearee (He who appears) from bad angles, but still leave the curtains nowhere near the illusion.

Full Schedule of Magic Lectures for San Diego:

September 11th the evening following our regularly scheduled ring meeting Doug Brewer an award winning close-up entertainer will present his lecture at Jack's Magic Place at 7 PM. Syd Segal is presenting the lecture and tickets are available through him or Brad Burt's Magic Shop. Brewer offer's many suggestions for restaurant and walk around performers.

October 15th David Eldridge will present a lecture that will appeal to close-up, parlor and stand-up magicians. David is the store manager at Brad Burt's Magic Shop and in the past year produced a number of video tapes featuring his unique style of magic. His recent "Ring and Rope" is receiving high praise from magicians nationwide. This lecture is also at Jack's Magic Place and begins at 7 P.M. Tickets available directly from David Eldridge at Brad Burts Magic Shop.

October 17th J. Scott Berry will present a lecture in San Diego. This event is being produced by Dick Dale. The location for this lecture is yet to be announced.

November 1st Martin Lewis will lecture to Ring 292. They meet at Baker's Square Restaurant at 1630 Descanso Avenue in San Marcos. A charge of \$15 for non-members. For those who missed Martin Lewis earlier this year in San Diego or want to see him again here is your opportunity.

November 15th Chad Long will present his lecture also at Jack's Magic Place at 7 PM. Craig Stone is sponsoring this lecture. More on Chad and the topic's he will cover in his lecture in the next edition of MagiCurrents.

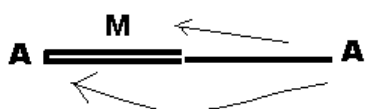


Figure 7 - Reversing Procedure

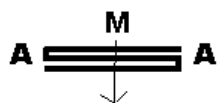


Figure 8 - Bursting Through!

6. Open the stage curtains with the two "door swingers" in place flanking the closed screen, holding the panels with one hand and facing front. The appearee is already standing behind the panels. If you want to produce a guest rather than yourself, you want to build up interest and suspense. "Ladies and Gentlemen, we would like to make a presentation at this time. Please direct your gaze to center stage!" The door swingers open and close the panels (see section 8 below), and the announcement then continues, "Presenting the Master of the Fete, Our Host (or guest), etc., etc., <his NAME!>" This does NOT ruin the surprise; on the contrary, the audience does not know what you are going to do, but they are "on the edge of their seats" waiting. The appearee then bursts through the panels, stepping forward and making a "Vaudeville Star" by hold out both hands at full arms' lengths for applause, and swiveling back and forth to survey the audience. Practice once with sheets of newspaper covering the panels, make the slits, and make sure he is comfortable with it. All of this really makes a difference, believe me.

7. I disagree with Anderson's starting position between the panels, and my instructions in the *Working* section reflect my revisions. I found my way to be more convincing: Start with both panels fully closed, and stand the appearee behind the rear one. Open the front panel first, and the audience sees both sides of the front panel and the inside of the rear panel. The appearee moves to the position behind the front panel, and the second panel is open. Now the audience has seen both sides of both panels. Close the rear one first, the appearee moves behind it, then close the front one. This works MUCH better!

8. Coach the door swingers to keep their eyes on the doors or the audience. If they even glance in the direction of the appearee, all is lost! They must act and look as if they know nothing, and they must control their eyes! Coach the appearee to step quietly from panel to panel, and work on the timing so that there is no hesitation between the hinging of one panel and the hinging of another. Coach the appearee to step lively and rip with gusto through the panels, and SMILE, which is hard to do when ripping! Also, the appearee could have handfuls of confetti, and push through the slits with his fists, tearing out and down with his forearms and tossing the confetti as he steps through the panels. The smoothest tear is to do the rear first and then the front, about half a second apart, rather than trying to tear through both papers at once, which will make him probably stumble.

If all of that seems like a lot of trouble, be assured that it is all worth the effort, and people will talk about it for months. Imagine how complicated a "pro" illusion is to perfect!

The Mark Wilson Complete Course In Magic has a similar idea, but not nearly as impressive, in my opinion.

Magic



Newsline

Past Ring 76 President and well known magic collector **J.P. Jackson**, spent more than a week in Balboa Navy Hospital in August for treatment of an ulcer. J.P. is in good spirits and continuing to undergo tests and treatment. He has also been diagnosed with T-Cell Lymphoma; J.P. says all of this has interrupted his plans to attend magic and collectors functions around the country this summer. He is home now and always enjoys visiting with friends and fellow magicians.

Magician and magic shop operator **Jay Leslie** has just released a new videotape on "How to Escape from Regulation & Trick Strait Jackets". Jay says this is the only video tape on the straight jacket escape and it is packed full of information on regulation and gimmicked jackets. The tape is \$25.00, he also sells strait jackets in all sizes both regulation and gimmicked. www.houseofenchantment.com for more information.

Ring 76 member **Terry Godfrey** was in Alaska working fairs in early August. He did his show on the set of the recently filmed "White Fang" Produced by the Disney Company. The set was a mock up of Dawson City in the 1890's. The set was moved to the fair grounds and is now part of the display there. Terry returned from Alaska on Monday August 13th and the next day left for fairs in New Mexico. He is a busy performer this time of

year.

Roy Armstrong and **Don Holcomb** have made donations of Linking Ring magazines to the Ring 76 Library that brings our collections current. This material is available to any member for research purposes. Very soon we will have a complete collection of 68-years of Linking Ring Magazines. There is a wealth of good material in the Trick Parade sections of the magazine.

Longtime Ring 76 member **Jim Beamon** better known as "Diamond Jack" now living at Mountain Home, Arkansas has cancer that is treatable but not curable. In spite of his illness he is making plans to be part of the San Diego IBM Convention in 2002. Jim was active in both of the IBM Conventions held in San Diego in the past and says he is doing his best to be here next summer.

World Champion Magician **Michael Ammar** contacted **Jon A. Hand**, our View From The Cheap Seats columnist, about his article, "Frequently Asked Questions for Beginning Magicians" which runs on the www.conjuror.com site. Ammar liked the article very much, and asked permission to add it to his site! Jon revised the two-year-old article for the Ammar web site which can be found at www.michaelammar.com. Take the time to check it out. Our congratulations to Jon Hand.

during their winter meeting in San Diego January 4th to the 6th. During that meeting the committee will iron out all of the details for the convention next July.

Ring President **Don Soul** is putting the finishing touches on a directory of all of the members of Ring 76. The directory is for ring networking. However, if you do not want your name and phone number and e-mail address published contact Don immediately before the list goes to press.

Richard Ustick is asking for volunteers to help with the rewriting of the Ring 76 bylaws. If you would like to help talk with Ustick at the next ring meeting.

Loch David Crane has just returned from four weeks of performing in Germany. Loch did many of his shows speaking in both German & English. He says the moment that sticks out most in his mind was performing for children who were patients at the Ronald McDonald House in Leipzig. He said he went from ward to ward doing magic.

What Should I Bring?

This month's meeting theme is a Teach-in. To get the most from the evening please bring,

- a) a deck of cards
- b) four half dollars
- c) a good length of rope
- d) \$5 if you want to buy lecture notes for an exciting new routine (not required to learn routine)

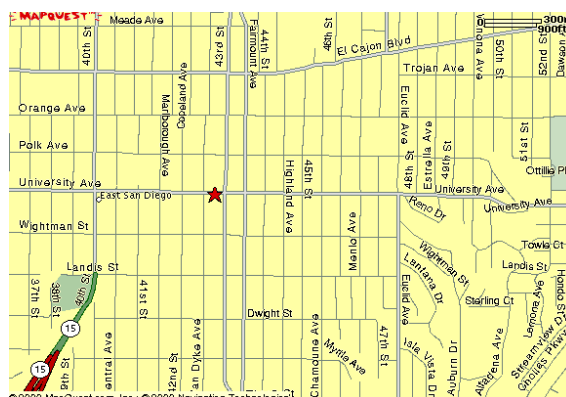
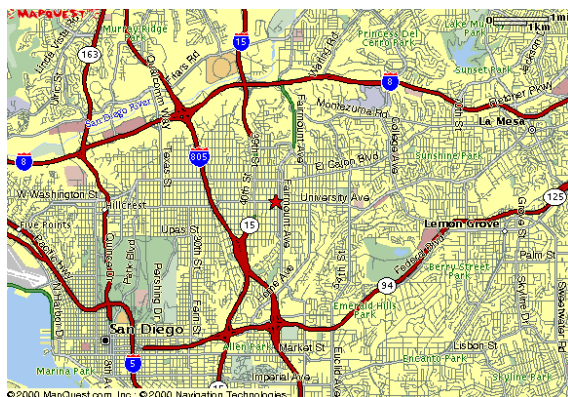
Ring 76 will play host to the IBM Convention Committee



San Diego Magic Palace

of Ring 76

University Ave.



Remember, Ring 76 now

meets at Jack White's Magic Palace. Same day. Same time. New location.

The next meeting will be Monday, September 10th, at 6:30. The address; 4275 University Ave., San Diego 92105

The meeting will feature Ring business, Convention business, and a great Teach-in. See you there.

I.B.M. Ring 76

San Diego, CA

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